amicable solution to the Naga issues. While there has been an exchange of views and efforts to reach a mutually acceptable position, the talks remained inconclusive. It will not be in public interest to disclose the details at this stage.

Raipur-Rourkela Power Grid

*659. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Raipur-Rourkela Power Grid has become operational;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be commissioned; and

(c) how this would help Maharashtra to overcome its power crisis?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Raipur-Rourkela 400 kV D/C Transmission Link, which inter-connects 400 kV sub-station at Rourkela in Eastern Region and 400 kV sub-station at Raipur in Western Region, was charged on 31st January, 2003 and has been synchronized on 2nd March, 2003.

(c) This link has the capacity to transfer 1000 MW power from Eastern Region to Western Region and *vice-versa*. At present, about 500 MW additional surplus power in Eastern Region is being transferred to power deficit Western Region over this link, which can be utilized by the constituent State of the Western Region, including Maharashtra, to overcome their power shortage.

DDP in Rajasthan

*660. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) progress made in the implementation of Desert Development Programme in the State of Rajasthan during the last three years;

(b) the details of Budget allocated for this project for the years 2000-2001, 2001-2002 and 2002-2003;

(c) whether any targets were fixed for the implementation of this project; and

(d) the details of achievements made under the said programme?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) 1. The Desert Development Programme is being implemented in 85 Blocks of 16 Districts in the State of Rajasthan in accordance with the Guidelines for Watershed Development since 1995-96 with the objective of controlling desertification and improving ecomomic conditions of the resource poor population inhabiting the programme areas. Besides, in view of the typical